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from Nature, true to local color and form, and barely indicating the "salient characteristics of plant and animal life, and rocky structure." The book consists partly of verse, which, Mr. Avery tells us, makes no poetical pretension. But, whether it does or not, some of it contains much better poetry than is written in verses which make a great deal of such pretension. We have not space to quote, but must refer the reader to the book itself, in proof of the truth of what we say. Mr. Avery's "Pictures" would make, with some revision, a guide-book of a very high order; but the prose style would need a little looking after by some remorseless reviser.

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- 7.—*Money and Legal Tender in the United States.* By H. R. LINDERMAN, Director of the Mint. New York : G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1877. 12mo, pp. x.-173.

IN this little manual Mr. Linderman has collected the laws relating to coinage, legal tender, and the money standard. The information at the present time, when the currency question is undergoing, as it usually does in Congress at least every five years, a thorough reëxamination, is valuable. Mr. Linderman does not share the delusions of the silver agitators, and his opinions on the subject of resumption and silver coinage are such as we could wish every one connected with the financial administration of the country held. He even goes so far as to intimate that the issue of forced paper legal-tender currency by the Government is invalid under the Constitution ; but, as he is aware of the decisions of the Supreme Court on the subject, we hardly understand his position—though, to speak it with reverence, it may be doubted if the Supreme Court itself does.

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- 8.—*Victor Hugo : Histoire d'un Crime—Déposition d'un Témoin.*
I. *Première Journée—Le Guet-apens.* II. *Deuxième Journée—La Lutte.* Paris : CALLMANN LÉVY, éditeur. Ancienne Maison Michel Lévy Frères. 1877. 8vo.

TWENTY-FIVE years ago, or even twelve—nay, even five or six—this book would have been regarded on all hands as the most important of the day. It is the narration, by an eye-witness, of the memorable *coup d'état* of 1851, which put Louis Napoleon on the throne of France, and that eye-witness one of the most noted of living Frenchmen. It was written at the time, and by a succession of

chances now first sees the light, twenty-six years after the event, when France, after two revolutions, a disastrous foreign war, and a dismemberment of her territory, again has been trembling on the verge of intestine tumult. Napoleon is disgraced and dead, his dynasty brought to an end, his family in exile ; and Victor Hugo, exiled by him in 1851, denounces him, over his grave, as a traitor to France. Here, one would think, we have materials enough for public interest, and the book itself is certainly not devoid of it. It is written, as the title indicates, more in the manner of a novel than of history ; but the style is not inappropriate to the subject, for all the events recounted are to the last degree sensational. It suffers somewhat from the fact that it comes out in parts. The promise held out in the "Guet-apens" and the "Lutte" will no doubt be amply redeemed in the forthcoming "Massacre," "Victoire," and "Chute," which form the subject of the third and fourth days, and the conclusion.

The mind turns back involuntarily, in reading this French account of the doings of the Man of December and his motley crowd of co-conspirators, to Kinglake's English description. Both writers treat the events in a highly-picturesque manner, and Kinglake was under disadvantages of a certain kind in being a foreigner. Yet does not Victor Hugo labor under disadvantages of his own in being a Frenchman ? There always arises a feeling in the reader's mind, on meeting with French accounts of French political or revolutionary movements, that they have not the good-fortune to know how singularly their performances would look in the eyes of people accustomed to constitutional government. To an Englishman or American they always present the serious spectacle of a conflict between constitutional aspirations and a natural tendency to the most unconstitutional and irregular political behavior. Hence French politics has always to our eyes a little of the spectacular and dramatic about it, and the drama is never to us more than half serious. Thackeray, in his "Next French Revolution," has admirably burlesqued this aspect of French affairs ; but to a Frenchman there is, of course, no burlesque about it. He cannot see why it is amusing that a people who do not know what *habeas corpus* is, should insist on trial by jury ; or why, if they do not understand that the responsibility of officers of government for illegal acts and a free election is an unheard-of thing, they should care very much whether the government is called a republic or a constitutional monarchy. For these reasons intelligent Englishmen, or Americans, are often able to discuss French questions better than

the French themselves, and for this reason we are inclined to think that Kinglake's will, as a history, supersede Victor Hugo's. As a story, the "*Histoire d'un Crime*" will bear comparison with the author's other works in narrative power, while it has besides the advantage of being true.

9.—*The House Beautiful. Essays on Beds and Tables, Stools and Candlesticks.* By CLARENCE COOK. New York : Scribner, Armstrong & Co. 1878. 8vo, pp. 336.

A YEAR or two since the English press, and, if we remember right, our own to a slight extent as well, undertook an investigation of the mysterious relations existing between the manufacturers of pianos and the noble army of pianists. The result of the inquiry seemed to establish the fact that piano-manufacturers had succeeded, by means of the control of concert-halls, and by combinations with managers, in reducing the pianist to a condition not far removed from slavery. He is, it appears, not allowed to play on any instrument he pleases, but is bound to use the pianos of the particular maker who has established his sway over the territory the artist selects for his professional tour. If he is not inclined to use this instrument, he finds it impossible to effect an engagement ; and thus the artist, longing to "interpret" his favorite composer—it may even be himself—is forced to pound out the praises of the well-known manufacturer Smith or Jones. At some concerts we have seen Smith's name conspicuously displayed on a placard hanging on the instrument, giving Smith for the time being far more fame than was allowed to Beethoven, Schumann, or Schubert. It was pointed out, at the time these disclosures were made, that the practice of enslaving pianists, and making them advertising agents, was cruel and corrupt, that it had a tendency to debase art, and was an imposition on the public.

We fear very much that Mr. Cook's book will expose him in some quarters to the charge of trying to establish a relation between authors and venders of domestic furniture, similar to that said to exist between pianists and piano-makers. He has in "*The House Beautiful*" attempted, as he says, to persuade people to abandon fashion, and pursue the paths of true art and taste in furnishing their houses. In this he is doing his duty as an artist and a citizen ; and if he could induce New-Yorkers to carry out this reform, not merely singly, but by whole blocks and streets, he would be entitled to much public grati-